

The China Mail.

HONGKONG, THURSDAY, 18TH JANUARY, 1866.

BIRTHS.

At Swatow, on the 22nd instant, the Wife of CHARLES WILLIAM BRADLEY, of a Daughter.

MARRIAGES.

At St. John's Cathedral, Hongkong, on the 17th January, LEONARD BAKER to SARAH ANN SWIN.

DEATHS.

By drowning, in the "Imbaya Passage," on the 20th October, 1865, JOHN LE BRON, Captain of British Barque.

At Swatow, on the morning of the 11th instant, suddenly, JOHN W. LEWIS RICHARDSON, Junior Member of the firm of Messrs. Bradley & Co.

LONDON, 27th November, 1865.

This is the month in which people commit suicide in England; and on these gloomy days of November, under this gloomy sky, I envy you Hongkong November, with its clear skies and refreshing North-easterly wind. However, you have to pay a fearful price for the pleasures of the cool season, in the endurance of the damp oppressive summer; and it seems that last hot season in China was one of the worst and most fatal which you have had for many years. I remember once going deeply into the mortality statistics of Hongkong some years ago, and collecting information on the subject from men who are now all at rest; that is, dead, with the exception of Sir John Bowring, whom I saw the other day looking more vigorous than ever, and lecturing an unfortunate person in the smoking room of a grand hotel. The conclusion to which I came was, that every now and then, at intervals of four or five years, there comes in the South of China a most unhealthy year, when the mortality among occidentals is simply enormous. Let those of you who have survived last hot season congratulate yourselves upon the fact, and think over your sins and amend the manner of your ways.

A still older Hongkong Governor than Sir John Bowring has just been giving proofs of his continued existence. Sir John Davis has come out with a volume of "Chinese Miscellanies," in which he discusses the Celestial mode of calculation, Huc's travel, the rise and progress of Chinese literature in England, Chinese roots, novels, romances and plays; Chusan and the valley of the Yang-tze. Dr Rennie, too, has just come out with a volume entitled "Peking and the Pekinese," from which I extract (p. 43 and p. 61, vol. I.) the following choice specimen of English.

"Kwei-liang, I may remark, is father-in-law to the Prince of Kung; and report states that another of the Miss Kwei-liangs is in the Emperor's harem."

"A similar event happened to Mr St. Clair's horse, while riding, this afternoon in another portion of the city."

The great literary event of the fortnight, however, has been the publication of Dr Livingstone's account of the Zambezi expedition, which is full of interesting matter, and suggests that Central Africa will prove an immense field for European and even American colonization.

The lake region of Central Africa has turned out to be much more extensive than was at first suspected; and it is not unlikely that for some time discoveries may prove to be wider than we even now imagine. Already four enormous lakes, not much inferior in size to Lake Superior, have been discovered in a portion of Africa, that not very long ago was supposed to be desert, and these sheets of water extend from a few degrees north of the equator, to about fourteen south of it, close to the 30th parallel of longitude. There was a vague assertion of the existence of such lakes in Portuguese writings, among the Arabs, and in Sanscrit poems; and it was the scholarship of Captain Burton which first suggested this splendid field of discovery and led him to the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Shortly after, and in connection with the same expedition, Speke was the first to visit Lake Nyanza. Dr Livingstone and the Zambezi expedition discovered Lake Nyassa, which they represent as being more than 200 miles in length; and the other day Mr. Samuel Baker and his heroic lady, returned home with their full accounts of a fourth enormous lake in the neighbourhood of Nyanza. These immense bodies of water have changed all our pre-conceived ideas in regard to the interior of Africa, and it is not yet known what connection may exist between them, much less what is the character of the watershed of Central Africa. Speke, in his confused, but often remarkably thoughtful, way, seemed to incline at times to the opinion that the African lakes were themselves the watershed; that is to say, that they had outlets at both their ends, and it is far from unlikely that this may be the case. However that may be, it is evident that these lakes will be of immense importance in the future development, and perhaps colonization, of Africa; and the discovery of their region is incomparably the greatest geographical event which has occurred since Columbus crossed the Atlantic and Vasco de Gama rounded the Cape of Storms. It is not at all unlikely that there may be other great lakes in the unknown regions, which lie between Tanganyika and Lake Tchad, which Burke visited far to the North-west. On both sides of tropical Africa there is a belt of low lying swampy and unhealthy land, about 300 miles in breadth, after which we ascend a series of chasms and come upon an elevated plateau of healthy land, with a temperate climate, diversified by still colder highland regions, and by great bodies of water. This immense plateau, which constitutes the centre of Africa, slopes towards its centre, as far as it is known to us. Dr Livingstone is the only European who has crossed it, but he has done so only across its southern and narrower section, and the

enormous regions, lying to the west of the lakes close on to the western shore of Africa and northward to Lake Tchad, have been entirely unexplored. When Captain Burton was in this country last summer he had some thoughts of getting up an expedition which would have attempted the last great and most difficult achievement which remains to be accomplished in the way of African travel, namely, the reaching of the lake country from the West, in the neighbourhood of the equator; but that would require almost infinite time and money; for there are no caravan routes on the west side of Africa as there are on the east. M. du Chaillu, however, has started from the West Coast with the intention of penetrating into the interior, if he possibly can; and Livingstone proposes, after rounding the southern end of Tanganyika, to push into the unknown regions to the West, if he can see his way to do so. "I propose," he said, in a speech delivered at Bombay lately, "to go to the Rovuma, to pass Lake Nyassi, and on past Tanganyika to a part of the country which exists in a portion of the map which is an entire blank. This I propose; but I don't know anything of the people or of the difficulties in the way." We can only wish this indefatigable traveller "God speed" on his new and splendid enterprise; but it seems evident from what we already know of Central Africa that it will afford a field for the development of race of European origin, and within a century or two, have innumerable locomotives moving over its vast elevated plains, and steamboats vexing the great sheets of water, which, as yet, have been seen only by a very few living travellers.

The members of the Zambezi expedition found that in Central Africa they were in no danger from sunstrokes, and could go about even in the middle of the day wearing cloth clothes, and cloth caps undefended by turbans. The country is exceedingly fertile, and both on the shores of the Zambezi and the Rovuma immense coal fields exist. May not Africa become in time a great field for Chinese Emigration? I am afraid the negro is being improved off the face of the earth; and in these portions of Africa where men of European origin cannot work, the Chinese coolie might be employed with advantage. At present, however, I don't suppose there are a hundred Chinamen in the Dark Continent.

A. W.

YEAR little of importance has marked the past week. The English Mail arrived, but, being four days beyond her time, brought nothing which we had not before. Hopes appear to be entertained at home that this Colony may yet be spared the Military tax swindle. Another case of piracy has occurred within hail of our shores, in the Ly-ee-moon Pass, upon a French brig named the *Jeanne et Joseph*. The whole of the cargo and other valuables were speedily plundered, one or two men killed or wounded, and the rest of the crew and the vessel saved only by the timely approach of the Spanish steamer *Circe*, a boat from which was sent at once to her assistance. A gunboat has been despatched to look after the pirates, and some hopes may be entertained of their being caught and punished. Our H. M., having commenced his morning coffee at the Race-course, made his first appearance regarding the various points of the animals under training.

NOTES concerning the Canton province, or any other of the seventeen provinces of the Empire, if compiled by an intelligent observer, cannot fail to interest our readers. Under the present circumstances, however, when the Rebels are again causing disturbance and apprehension in the districts surrounding Canton, it is probable that the Notes we publish in another column may prove still more interesting to those who deeply ponder over the state of the Empire. Some may be of opinion that the two or three rivers of the Canton province have by this time been fully described in these columns—that, as a subject for comment, they have been in a figurative sense, very nearly "dried up." But, such an idea, we may at once remark, is an entirely mistaken one. Short trips, and written accounts of the same, certainly have done a good deal for us in the way of providing information on this head; but excursions must necessarily be productive of only superficial and partial knowledge, if notes of each individual trip be not compiled and given to the world, so as to enable the world to give its impartial verdict from the whole of the facts thus presented. This remark may be found suggestive to many who have failed to see their duty to give publicity to what they have heard or seen on such trips into the interior of China; and at the risk of being thought selfish, we cannot but express our conviction that it is incumbent upon all in view of the silent but certain change which is being gradually ushered in by the Chinese nation, and the equally gradual knowledge which is being gathered concerning its foreign advisers and himself. Many facilities have been given unasked for, in furtherance of our commercial relations. New ports, in Formosa, were opened; Changchow emerged from its seclusion and opened its gates to the foreigner. Attention has been given to the proper lighting

of the coast.

Buoys and light ships have been established; improvements in rivers and harbours commenced and partly carried on, and many points in dispute between the merchants and the officials were decided in favour of the former. The Chinese Government, though still very far from carrying out to the fullest extent the principle of free commercial intercourse sanctioned by its late treaties, showed nevertheless, during the year 1865 a manifest desire to meet our wishes on every point, and to improve the condition of the Empire by the cordial adoption of European knowledge and appliances. There are still dozens of points on which improvement is still needed, but they have shown their willingness to yield to the demands of our higher and better civilization. This the Chinese have done, although, during the past year, the whole of the troops up to that time retained at Taku and Shanghai were withdrawn, and with them went the last vestige of the military occupation of 1860, and although as before mentioned, the suppression of the rebellion rendered it no longer necessary for them, in their own interests to be on the best of terms with us.

With the past year the career of Sir ERICK BRUCE as Minister Plenipotentiary at Peking came to an end, and for some months England had no proper representative at the Imperial Court. The new year witnesses the advent of a new Minister, Sir RUTHERFORD ARCOOK, whose experience of the Chinese during his long tenure of consular appointments in China, and whose recent diplomatic successes in Japan render him in every way fitted for the post. From Sir RUTHERFORD's energy and force of character we expect great changes in the aspect of affairs throughout China. He will urge the authorities in action to keep pace with the spirit of the times. He is too impetuous a man to have had the charge of our interests in China during the past five years of doubt, and difficulty, and of experiment on the part of the Mandarins, but we could not now have a more suitable minister.

In the social life of China there has been no great movement, no perceptible tendency one way or the other. It is too soon yet, but the shake given to old and preconceived ideas of men and things in China, by the rebellions of the last ten years, the foreign wars, and extension of intercourse with foreigners, has implanted many seeds that by and by must take root and grow up. Missionary enterprise has no great conquests, but its advance is steady if slow.

Turning from the Chinese to the foreign communities in China, the year 1865 was an eventful year for them—a year of heavy commercial losses, and many and serious failures; it inaugurated a much more extended and liberal system of business than had previously prevailed. The blight that fell on the tea trade, and the difficulties and short-comings in the silk trade drove many men and much capital into other branches of trade, and caused people to look round for other investments for their funds and other fields for the exercise of their talents in lieu of the old ones, irretrievably injured. The result has been a rapid increase in general commercial enterprise in new forms and in new directions. The passing of the Limited Liability Ordinance here in Hongkong, in the early part of last year, although partly the result of the movement above indicated, did much, nevertheless, to further it; and two or three most useful establishments have risen and promise to flourish under its sanction.

An immense change has effected during the past year in the internal government of the English Communities in China and Japan and indirectly in that of the whole foreign community in China. The exterritoriality clauses of the Treaty have received their fullest development by the separation of the Colony of Hongkong from all official connection with English subjects in other parts of China, and by the establishment of a separate set of laws and Tribunals for British residents in the dominions of the Emperors of China and Japan. The Order in Council of the 9th March last inaugurated a new and more effective regime, the good effects of which have already been seen, but of which the full benefit will only be experienced after the lapse of time. The most striking feature in the new arrangement is the provision made, and lately assented to by the Chinese authorities, for the settlement of all disputed customs cases, and the recovery in the new Courts of all penalties claimable by the Chinese Government under the provisions of the Treaty.

Municipal Government, if it cannot be said to have sprung into life in 1865, certainly took a new lease of life, and assumed a new and more creditable appearance. The decisions of the new Courts at Shanghai have removed all doubts as to the authority and power of Municipal Councils. The necessities of many of the more recently settled ports have driven them to imitate the example set them by Shanghai. The Year 1865 saw municipal institutions take root and flourish in Japan.

The writer of the notes on the West River given elsewhere has had frequent occasion

to visit the districts of which he speaks, and may be said to be in a better position to give an opinion than one who has had no other opportunity of observation beyond a single pleasure-trip. They extend considerably beyond the space at our disposal in this issue, and a portion must therefore stand over for another week.

THE last year was a year of changes many and great—a year to be remembered in the annals of the world as a period of great and beneficial alterations in the political and social life of the European communities in China and Japan,—a year to be referred to in the annals of many families, as a time of great sorrows and many and serious losses.

The last year was the first since the signature of the Treaty of Tientsin, during which the foreigners enjoyed a full and unrestricted intercourse with the Chinese, unimpeded by the presence of an organised rebellion in the heart of the country. It was the first in which we had an opportunity of testing the working of the Treaty to its fullest extent and of ascertaining unmistakably the feeling of the people and their rulers when uninfluenced by fear of our power, and with no special motive for propitiating us to assist them. At the commencement of 1865, the Taeping rebellion was a thing of the past. Thanks to General SZEKELY, Admiral HORE and Colonel GORDON, it had been crushed out.

The whole of the great cities on the line of the Grand Canal were in the hands of the Imperialists; Nanking had been captured in every way fitted for the post. From Sir RUTHERFORD's energy and force of character we expect great changes in the aspect of affairs throughout China. He will urge the authorities in action to keep pace with the spirit of the times. He is too impetuous a man to have had the charge of our interests in China during the past five years of doubt, and difficulty, and of experiment on the part of the Mandarins, but we could not now have a more suitable minister.

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Truly the year 1865 was an eventful one—1866 may be as fruitful in progress, more in the absence of sickness and commercial and social misfortunes.

THE WEST RIVER.

Frequent journeys up and down the West River having made me somewhat familiar with it, perhaps a short notice of its points of interest may be acceptable to your readers.

We will begin at the "Sz In Kan," where boats from Canton usually enter the West River. This passage, said to be artificial, connects the West with the North River. The first place we meet with is Tsing ki, which is a small *hui* or market town on the left bank of the river. Its chief trade is unexplored directions.

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The Chinese system of fairs or market days affords, missionaries and others who wish to come in contact with the people, an opportunity of seeing them gathered together. The fairs are held on two days out of the ten, or if the business is greater, on three days out of ten. The country people for miles around bring their produce to the market town, and make their purchases there. The shops, with their medicines, dry goods, jewellery, meat, &c., are all in these market towns. The artisans and traders are congregated there. The villages, again, are inhabited by the families of the men in the market towns, and by the farmers and literary men. The villages contain no schools, except one or two little groceries.

At Tsing ki is a stream, navigable in the winter time, leading to Tsu Sha, the principal market town in the Sz-u district, and to the district town (walled) of Sz-u. Tsu Sha was nearly all destroyed by the rebels in 1860, but it has been mostly rebuilt. Sz-u is noted for its fine *kuo* or loose-skinned yellow oranges (*citrus medica*). Passing the mouth of this stream, we find ourselves in the main stream of the West River, a small stream leading to Puk T'ui. This region produces a long, knotted rush four or five feet in height, from which Chinese dollar bags and mat for sails are made. The grass is cut and dried, the women then pound it flat with a heavy piece of wood made like a street paver's rammer or a Chinese pile driver. As you approach some of the villages the noise of these rammers reminds you of the busy hum of a manufacturing town in the West. After being flattened the rush is woven by the hands of women and children into mats. This branch of industry affords support to many families in Shu Hing and in the country to the south of it.

On the right bank of the river here, just above the Gap, is a quarry which furnishes stone for the best Chinese inkstones. It is below the surface of the water. It is quite an expensive job to open the quarry. First, permission has to be obtained from the Imperial authorities, as all products of mines in China belong to the Emperor; this requires a large sum. Then, a dam has to be built and the water pumped out. It is said to be opened only once in 20 or 30 years.

On the second ravine on this bank is a native flour-mill turned by water power. The wheat used here and flour ground here furnish a good part of the freight in the passage-boats between Shu Hing and Canton.

Near the lower mouth of the Gap is the right bank in a quarry which furnishes stone for the best Chinese inkstones. It is below the surface of the water. It is quite an expensive job to open the quarry. First, permission has to be obtained from the Imperial authorities, as all products of mines in China belong to the Emperor; this requires a large sum. Then, a dam has to be built and the water pumped out. It is said to be opened only once in 20 or 30 years.

Opposite to the Chin House, where the *Wan* or Lepers' Convent is situated, is a Roman Catholic cemetery. The bank of the river. It is the Roman Catholic cemetery. The gate of Shu Hing is also known for several years past.

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that it might be intended as his tenure expired and he leave, a friend presented inkstone. He accepted it, and, as he journeyed down the river a storm burst. His conscience troubled him greatly. He seized it and threw it into the water. The storm ceased, and the stone was with him on an island, which now remains as a monument to the long-lost integrity of the author.

osite the western extremity of the lake is a little creek leading to *Teng-u-shan*. It is called *Lou*. The common belief is that one of the Emperors of China passed a night here, and in deference to His Imperial Highness kept away and have avoided the place until the present.

On *Teng-u-shan* is one of the relictions of the West River. Here they say that this spot, a well-known cascade, is well worth a visit. A small temple was built here by the author.

At the entrance of the Custom House, where duty is levied on all the river, is a bank, at the entrance of the

Custom House, where duty is levied on all the river.

relict is an extraordinary

relict, which has been imposed since the Taiping re-

lations are farmed to men

and to the officers, who

can be seen to the

Shiu Hing Gap. Each

side rise to a considerable

height being about 2,900 feet.

the current is not much

as usual in other parts of

the summer when the "west-

er" is high, the Gap is sometimes

for several days for boats going

when passable the currents and

rocks make the passage a slow,

sometimes dangerous one. A

has been cut on the left bank,

been built over the ravines,

of Chinese odes have been cut

and the water pumped out. It

is opened only once in 20 or 30

days.

second ravine on this bank is a

mill turned by water power.

used here and flour ground here

part of the freight in the

between Shiu Hing and Can-

the lower hills on this bank is

stone which imagination has

into the figure of a woman

her husband (*mong fu shek*).

that she stood there watching

turn of her husband, who was an

the river; he was killed and the

was changed into stone while

this legend, variously amplified,

the story with some of the Chinese

collection of these would afford

the Ovid materials for the

second Niope.

bank of the river, just above

a small stream leading to *Puk T'ou*

region produces a long, knotted

five feet in height, from which

dollar bags and for sails are

the grass is cut and dried, the

is ponded flat with a heavy

and made like a street paver,

a Chinese pile driver. As you

come to Shiu Hing, and in

the south of it

the river here is in the

covered with wheat, buckwheat, and sugar cane. The

is grown in the hills and is

boiled or steamed. The

which sugar is manufactured,

called *chuk che* or "bamboo

the hardness of the skin. It

grow so high as the first-named

the stocks rarely exceed 1000

feet in diameter and

is sometimes seen, but it is

very insipid and useless.

come to Shiu Hing. This is

the Capital City and was the

provinces (Kwang, Tung,

Si) previous to the rising of

the late importance. The

General's Yamen is still

but, only the front walls and

reinforced. It is now used as

around the military ex-

It is still the garrison city of

under the immediate command

of the seven regiments, composing

are here. A Ta-tu, a Depart-

ment and a District Magistrate

of Yamen in Shiu Hing. It

the chief importance from the

these officers and the consequent

Examinations which are held in

the examinations the popula-

increased by about 10,000.

is pleasantly situated on the

of the river. Behind the city

the plain, covered with rice fields

to the foot of a range of

the North Ridge. The principal

shops along the river for a

mile

boat-ply between Shiu Hing

Fat Shau and Sampan; besides

boat-loads leave less frequently for

and other places. The chief ex-

we may apply this term to goods

so short a distance, as the mats

mentioned, paper fans, hats, ink-

stones, and sometimes marble slabs,

poultry. The principal manufac-

the place are fans, mats and in-

the vegetable productions of the

is the *Shiu Hing* on Shiu

It resembles the lotus but in

size, and brings a good price in

The plant, like the lotus, grows

in the water, but the leaves are much larger

often reaching the diameter of five or six feet, and their upper surface is covered with spines.

The principal point of interest in the vicinity of Shiu Hing is the "seven stars." These are a number of remarkable limestone rocks at the foot of the North Ridge and about three miles from the river bank. They appear to be immense boulders rising from the plain to the height of several hundred feet. There are several caverns in these rocks. The principal one is called the *Kwan Yin* cave, from its containing a statue of the Goddess of mercy carved out of the living rock. One cave is called the "dash cave" and contains what is called "the dragon," the calcareous concretion on its roof being fancied to be like a fabulous animal. This cave can only be seen by torchlight. It is inaccessible in the summer on account of being partly flooded by water. Several Buddhist monasteries have been built on these rocks. How sad it is that the Creator would call forth that which the priests have set up his senseless images decked off with tinsel and gewgaws. This is offensive not only to the soul of the Christian, but to the taste of every man of cultivation and refinement. We must admit that the priests have shown their knowledge of the human heart by associating their idols with spots which call forth the feelings of

natural religion.

Had *TSENG Kwo-fan* power to move into any province he chose, we have not the slightest doubt about his capability of crushing the rebellion within a short time. But having crushed it, his power might become dangerous to the Manchou dynasty; and it is on this account, that the Government is afraid of extending the powers of a renowned general. This is the key to the prolongation of the struggle of Chinese rebellions.

In one of these monasteries may be seen a shaven priest who was formerly one of the rebel leaders. His tall, masculine form would lead us to believe that he did not become an ascetic from choice. He chose between losing his head and losing his hair. It is not surprising that he chose the latter alternative. Monasteries in China, like those in Europe in the middle ages, are occasionally refuges for political offenders; a man who buries himself in a convent being supposed to be almost as effectually "out of the world" as if he had been executed.

Opposite to the Shiu Hing is the mouth of a river leading to the district of *San Hing*. It is in some places a beautiful stream, but is quite shallow in the dry season. A great deal of rice is produced in this district. The betel-pepper (Piper betel) is also grown and brought to Shiu Hing for sale. It is said that native opium is also produced from the Imperialities, as all products of mines and of industry are farmed to men.

Just above Shiu Hing is a regular Custom House, where duty must be paid on produce coming down the river.

Opposite to the Custom House is a Roman Catholic village situated on the bank of the river. It is known as *Ma Fung Wau* or "Leper's Cove." There is another Roman Catholic settlement near the North Gate of Shiu Hing. An American missionary has also been living at Shiu Hing for several years and has gathered a small church there.

After passing the Custom House we come to a large plain on the right bank of the river. It is known as the *Tai Wan* or Great Bend and embraces several scores of villages. Rice is the chief production, and is produced in great quantities and is

called *chuk che* or "bamboo for the

the great bend of the river.

Here I have seen growing wild the

with its glossy, thorny leaves, reminding one of Christmas time in happy lands towards the setting sun.

After passing *Tai Wan* the hills come to a large plain on the right bank of the river. It is known as the *Tai Wan* or Great Bend and embraces several scores of villages. Rice is the chief production, and is produced in great quantities and is

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